GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PLANNING
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4807
ANSWERED ON:09.05.2007
CONFERENCE OF THE EDUCATION MINISTERS OF STATES
Owaisi Shri Asaduddin

Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Conference of the Education Ministers of the States was held recently in New Delhi to discuss the recommendations of the National Knowledge Commission;

(b) if so, the details of the discussions held in regard to share of additional expenditure on education;

(c) whether the Conference has also discussed and suggested ways to implement the recommendations of the National Monitoring Committee for minority education; and

(d) if so, the details thereof along with the Strategy chalked out for the implementation of different aspects of the educational needs of the country.

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V.RAJASEKHARAN)

(a) : Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) : The details in this regard are as per Annexure.

Annexure

Record of the Consensus Points

1. General

(i) The HRD Ministry and State Education Departments will work intensively with other concerned authorities and Departments at the Central and State levels so as to increase public expenditure on Education to the level of 6% of GDP, by the end of the XI Plan period. Also the National Development Council is urged to evolve a consensus in this regard to the manner of achieving this goal at the earliest.

(ii) The implementation of the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admission) Act, which was enacted and notified in January, 2007 has, by an interim order of the Hon`ble Supreme Court, been kept in abeyance. The Conference noted that the Central Government is examining all legal options to resolve this issue at the earliest.

(iii) States agreed to speed up enactment of State-specific legislations to give effect to the 93rd Constitutional Amendment which enables reservations for SCs, STs and Socially and Educationally Backward Classes in educational institutions. State Governments urged the Central Government to ensure that the reservations for the OBCs in the Central Educational Institutions was implemented from the forthcoming academic session, this year itself.

(iv) Education Ministers of the State Governments were of the opinion that the recommendations of the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) were unrealistic or undesirable from the point of view of the enhancing access and equity in Higher and Technical Education. It was resolved that the recommendations of the NKC may be considered by the States only after a view in regard to these recommendations have been taken by the Central Government.

(v) Central Regulatory bodies like UGC, AICTE and NCTE should give due weightage to the views and concerns of State Governments. Policies and statutory provisions relating to these bodies should also be reviewed for this purpose, where necessary.

(vi) Education Ministers of States where there is a ban on recruitment of teachers/regular teachers, agreed to make assiduous efforts to get this ban lifted at the earliest to enable filling up of vacant posts on a regular basis.

(vii) Every effort will be made to make buildings of all existing educational institutions − schools, colleges and universities − barrier free, so as to provide full access to disabled students, latest by the end of the XI Plan. Also, all new buildings will be constructed so as to be barrier-free, differentially-abled friendly, eco-friendly and energy efficient.

(viii) States noted that work of authentication of education certificates would cease to be done at the level of HRD Ministry with effect from 30.6.2007. States which have not yet established necessary mechanisms for undertaking this work, agreed to do so latest by that date.

2. Elementary Education

(i) The conference endorsed the view that the issue of the Centre-State funding pattern in the SSA to be continued on a 90:10 ratio for the NE States and on a 75:25 ratio for other States be examined appropriately by the Government of India.

(ii) A consensus emerged in the meeting to continue the implementation of the SSA programme with vigour and commitment, and with the fullest attention to equity issues; improvement of learning outcomes of students; implementing focused programmes for improving language and mathematics basic levels in early primary grades and tracking student as well as teacher attendance rates at elementary levels.

(iii) State Ministers agreed on the need to consolidate the initiatives taken over the past 2-1/2 years on the Mid Day Meal Programme and to streamline delivery systems to ensure better management and distribution of foodgrains and other commodities required for serving a hot cooked meal. States are required to put in place mechanisms that would ensure that schools are not deprived of timely financial assistance to meet the daily requirements of running the programme.

(iv) State Ministers expressed apprehension that, in the expansion of the Mid Day Meal Programme to the upper primary stage in educationally backward blocks, the current parameters for identifying such blocks could exclude some of the poorer and backward blocks in the country. The Government of India will re-formulate the parameters such that the entire upper primary stage is covered by the end of the XI Plan.

3. Adult Education

(i) It was agreed to work towards the target of achieving 85% literacy by the end of the 11th Plan, and to restore the importance which the National Literacy Mission had enjoyed in the 1990s. State Governments were urged to complete their literacy programmes in a time bound manner so that the districts can move into the continuing education phase as soon as possible. They were also requested to bring about convergence between Continuing Education and other major programmes like National Rural Health Mission and National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme.

(ii) Some States raised the issue of suitable remuneration for volunteers. The Central Government is examining this issue.

4. Secondary Education

With the universalisation of elementary education nearing completion, the imperative of a Scheme of Universalisation of Secondary Education to be implemented in a mission mode was appreciated by all. It was, however, recognized that the contours of the Scheme would only be finalized once the 11th Plan exercise was completed. Pending this, all State Governments and Union Territories were requested to set up a Task Force so as to identify gaps in the secondary education sector, particularly in terms of access and infrastructure.

5. Higher Education

(i) The Conference endorsed the target of increasing Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for Higher Education from the present about 10% to at least 15% by the end of the XI Plan, with the minimization of gender and social category gaps. States which are significantly below the national average at present in regard to GER, agreed to make special efforts to come upto the national average, with suitable assistance from the Central Government to correct regional imbalances in tertiary education.

(ii) At least one State University in each State which does not at present have any Central University may be funded to the level of a Central University, through the UGC.

(iii) State Governments will take urgent steps to avail of various schemes of UGC assistance, incl. for women`s hostels, so as to take maximum possible advantage of the enhanced allocation available for State Universities with the UGC. These steps would include, inter alia, the following :

@ Pro-actively encouraging State Universities, which are yet to apply for recognition under section 12 B of UGC Act, 1956, to do so now so as to make them eligible for funding by the UGC. UGC would prepare a fast-track mechanism to ensure that all applications from such universities are processed on priority.

@ As temporary affiliation by university renders colleges ineligible for UGC assistance, all State Governments will make efforts to facilitate early grant of permanent affiliation to maximum possible number of colleges − especially those located in rural, scheduled, and minority concentration areas − so that they can avail of development assistance from UGC.

(iv) In the XI Plan UGC should revamp its scheme to promote job oriented courses, so as to widen its scope and coverage, and to make it more effective.

(v) State Governments will also encourage all their universities and colleges to go in for accreditation by NAAC, and in regard to technical education courses by NBA.

It was agreed that technical education institutions applying for accreditation to the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) should not

be expected to bear any costs in this regard, except for the prescribed accreditation fees, and that all expenses connected with the inspection visit of the NBA team should be borne by the NBA/AICTE.

(vi) Efforts will be made to network all institutions of higher and technical education so that collaborative research and shared experiences strengthen our tertiary education.

(vii) State Governments will also advise their universities to adopt/adapt UGC- approved curricula and to switch over to semester and credit systems, within two years.

(viii) States agreed to encourage their universities/colleges and technical education institutions to become members of INFLIBNET (Information for Library Network) and INDEST (Indian National Digital Library for Engineering Sciences and Technology) consortia, respectively, so that they gain access to e-journals and other online academic resources through the centralized subscription process of these consortia.

(ix) It was agreed that UGC should give development aid on preferential basis to institutions which are located in backward rural areas or cater to minorities, women or other disadvantaged sections. It was also agreed that UGC should work out suitable parameters for calculating the Diversity Index of the various institutions and provide rewards by way of enhanced developmental and other grants to institutions which score high on the Diversity index, taking into account both recruitment and enrolment.

6. Technical Education

(i) States whose intake capacity in technical education courses per lakh population is significantly less than the national average, agreed to initiate necessary policies and programmes in the XI Plan so as to come up to the level of the national average.

(ii) State agreed to make efforts to set up, by the end of the XI Plan, a polytechnic in each of those Districts which do not have a polytechnic at present, but are large enough to sustain one. They also agreed to consider setting up Women`s Polytechnics in such specially identified districts as have no separate women`s polytechnic at present. The Ministry will work towards providing financial assistance of non-recurring nature for this purpose.

(iii) State Governments will advise their Universities to update/revise their curricula in technical education in consultation with AICTE, and also to switch over to semester and credit based grading system.

(iv) AICTE should be asked to review the norms fixed for polytechnics as also for introduction of new subjects so as to encourage private public participation.

(v) AICTE should also be asked to develop suitable mechanisms for meaningful and effective consultations with the State Governments.

(vi) The issue of having a minimum percentage of marks in the qualifying examination for admissions in the technical institutions was raised by the State Governments. It was noted that the AICTE Regulations in this regard do not specify such a percentage and all those who pass the qualifying examination are eligible to appear in the entrance examinations conducted for admissions to various technical institutions. It was agreed that the AICTE would examine the feasibility of imposing a condition of obtaining a minimum percentage of marks in the qualifying examinations for entry in the technical institutions.

7. Vocational Education

Creation / upgradation of facilities which have bearing on skills / training across all sectors of education need to be vigorously pursued. This would include, inter-alia, participation of trade /industry / employer organistions in curriculum design and certification. A national framework of qualification for skills training would be devised.

8. Distance Education

(i) States agreed to liberally make available premises and other infrastructure of their institutions to serve as study-centres / regional centres of IGNOU, and to permit teachers in their institutions of higher learning to take up the assigned work in IGNOU Study Centres subject to the condition that their normal work should not be affected and IGNOU compensates the institutions at least to the extent of variable costs, besides giving some remuneration for the extra work done by the teachers.

(ii) States noted the need to quickly enter into tripartite MoU with ISRO and MHRD for proper utilization of EDUSAT. All States which are yet to execute these MoUs, agreed to do so in the next two months. States which have already executed the MoUs agreed to intensify efforts for providing infrastructural and administrative facilities for installation and maintenance o f Satellite Interactive Terminals (SITs) and Receive Only Terminals (ROTs).

(iii) States welcomed the establishment of the `SAKSHAT` Education Portal by the Ministry, and agreed to host it on State level servers as well, and also to develop and post on this portal, learning modules in their respective languages, and suited to the State specific context.

9. Minority Education

The Scheme of introduction of modern subjects in Madrassa institutions, being a demand-driven scheme, needs to be widely publicized with the active involvement of the State Governments. Special campaign would be launched by the MHRD, in association with State Governments, for willing Madrassa Institutions to volunteer for assistance under the Scheme. The National Institute of Open

Schooling (NIOS) would launch a programme of linking with willing Madrassa Institutions for imparting education in modern subjects and vocational education through open and distance learning mode, leading to appropriate certification of eligible and successful Madrassa students by the NIOS.